

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

An illumination optical system for illuminating a mask using light from a light source includes a shape varying mechanism for continuously making a shape of an effective light source variable, wherein the shape varying mechanism includes a first stop plate that has a first aperture part for allowing the light to pass through the first aperture part, and a second stop plate that has second aperture part for allowing the light that has passed through the first stop plate through the second aperture part.